



Germany: Facts & Figures May 2007

A monthly overview of current opinion data and statistical information in the Federal Republic of Germany

Politics

If Bundestag elections would be held May 27, 2007, the CDU/CSU would receive 38% of the vote, the SPD 27%, the Green Party 10%, the FDP 10%, the PDS (with WASG) 10%, and all other parties combined 5%. (Forsa. 05/23/07)

According to the media, the SPD won in the state election in Bremen, despite losing more than 5% of the votes compared to the last election four years ago. The SPD received 36.8% of the votes (down from 42.3%) and the CDU 25.7% (down from 29.8%). The Left Party entered a western German state parliament for the first time in history and received 8.4%. The Green Party received 16.4% and the FDP 6%. Bremen's SPD leader, Jens Böhrnsen, did not indicate whether he wants to renew the state's grand coalition or form a new one with the Greens Party. He ruled out an alliance with the Left Party. (Major papers, 05/14/07)

Economy

The European Commission predicts higher economic growth than expected for all nations using the Euro. For Germany, the Commission predicts a 2.5% growth this year and 2.8% next year. Unemployment is likely to remain high at 8.9% this year and 8.5% next year. The Commission also predicts a 1.1% decline of the budget deficit to 0.6% this year, while the budget deficit is likely to be reduced further to 0.3% in 2008. (Major papers, 05/08/07)

In February 2007, German insolvency courts reported 13,118 insolvencies, 2,340 of them referred to enterprises and 10,778 to other debtors. While enterprise insolvencies decreased 15.1% compared with February 2006, an increase was observed in the total number of insolvencies (+10.3%) and in insolvencies of other debtors (+18.0%). The latter group includes in particular consumers (8,207; +22.2%), individuals, for example as members of partnerships and formerly self-employed persons (2,413; +8.4%), and deceased persons' estate insolvencies (158; -17.3%). (Federal Statistical Office, 05/08/07)

Society

68% of Germans oppose the country's engagement in Afghanistan, while 29% believe it is the right thing to do. In 2002, 55% of Germans believed the mission in Afghanistan is right and 44% rejected it. 63% of Germans said the Bundeswehr should be withdrawn from Afghanistan, while 35% said the army should stay. 3 German soldiers were killed in Afghanistan on May 19th. (Emnid. FT Deutschland, 05/23/07 and Forsa. Stern, 05/24/07)

The differences in population development between the old and the new Länder will continue to increase. In the old Länder, a population decline of 14% is expected for the period from 2006 to 2050, whereas in the new Länder the population will decrease by 31%. The eastern part of Germany will be affected much more strongly by the continuing ageing of the population than the western part. Currently, the share of the population of working age (from 20 to under 65 years) in the total population in the new Länder (62%) is larger than in the old Länder (60%). The labour force potential in the new Länder will decline more rapidly than in the western part of Germany and will be 47% in 2050 (old Länder: 52%). (Federal Statistical Office. 05/22/07)

More than 40 million Germans over the age of 14 are using the Internet, an increase of 2.2 million from last year. Since 1997, the number of Internet users increased from 6.5% to 62.7%. (ZDF-TV/HR. Tagesspiegel, 05/11/07).

200,000 international students are currently study at German universities, making Germany the third most popular place to study after the United States and Britain. (DAAD. Sueddeutsche, 05/10/07)

The Transportation Department in Washington expects 1.7 million Germans to visit the United States in 2011. Last year, 1.4 million Germans traveled to the U.S., a decline of 2.1% compared to 2005. For 2007, the Department expects an increase of 2% primarily because of the strong value of the Euro. (FAZ, 05/10/07)

A total of 5,091 people were killed in road traffic accidents in Germany in 2006, a decline of 5% from 2005. (Federal Statistical Office. 05/09/07)

Crime in Germany dropped by 1.4% in 2006 compared to the figures from 2005. At the same time, the police were able to solve 55.4% (up 0.4%) of all crimes. (Kriminalitätsstatistik. Major papers, 05/09/07)

60% of Germans consider their economic situation to be "good" or "very good," up from 47% in March. Only 29% (38% in March) said their situation is "less good." With respect to their security situation, 83% said they felt "rather safe." For that reason, a majority is opposed to stricter laws against crime and terror. 54% believe the security laws are sufficient, while 44% called for stricter laws. (ARD/Die Welt. Deutschlandtrend. 05/04/07)

52% of Germans said that G8 summit in Germany "makes sense," whereas 39% said the opposite. (Stern. Forsa, 05/03/07)